

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1284

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3939

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, IN, IR

SUBJ: IRAN-INDIA RELATIONS LACK SUBSTNCE

REF: A. TEHRAN 3843 B. NEW DELHI 4502

1. MEAGER RESULTS OF HAKSAR'S VISIT (REFTEL A) DEMONSTRATE SLOW PACE OF INTENSIFYING IRAN'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH INDIA. ASIDE FROM KUDREMUKH PROJECT, LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THUS FAR TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLEMENTARITY OF TWO COUNTRIES' ECONOMIC SYSTEMS WHICH HAS BEEN MENTIONED SO FREQUENTLY IN PRESS REPORTS. DESPITE EXCHANGES OF HIGH-LEVEL VISITS AND ACCOMPANYING WARM WORDS, POLITICAL RELATIONS ALSO LACK MUCH SUBSTANCE, AS EMBASSY NEW DELHI OBSERVED IN REFTEL B.

2. AT PRESENT THERE ARE NO MAJOR DIFFERENCES OF VIEW BETWEEN INDIA AND IRAN, BUT NEITHER ARE THERE STRONG FACTORS COMPELLING THEM TO SEEK CLOSE COOPERATION. SIMPLY PUT, IRAN DOES NOT PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO INDIA. THERE HAS BEEN NO REACTION TO CHAVAN'S SPEECH TO THE NON-ALIGNED COORDINATION BUREAU IN HAVANA CRITICIZING IRAN'S MAJOR ARMS PURCHASES. IRAN WOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY DIMINUTION OF THESE IN ANY CASE, AND INDIAN EMBASSY HERE HAS FOLLOWED A POLICY CONFIDENTIAL

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OF AVOIDING THE SUBJECT. IRANIANS SEE CENTO TIES AS USEFUL CHANNEL FOR EXCHANGE OF MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION AND FOR SCHEDULING OF TRAINING EXERCISES WHICH IRAN FINDS VALUABLE. IRANIAN ANSWER TO ANY INDIAN CRITICISM OF THAT TIE WOULD BE THAT CENTO'S

DEFENSIVE NATURE SHOULD OFFER INDIA NO WORRIES.

3. AT CONFERENCE IN LATE MARCH SPONSORED BY IRAN'S INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES ON PERSIAN GULF AND INDIAN OCEAN, ISSUE OF IRAN'S RELATIONS WITH INDIA WAS HANDLED DELICATELY BY FOREIGN AND IRANIAN PARTICIPANTS. SOME SAW COMPLEMENTARITY OF ECONOMIC INTEREST AND EVEN OF FOREIGN POLICIES, WHILE OTHERS PREDICTED EVENTUAL RIVALRY BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES OVER STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN INDIAN OCEAN. IN VIEW OF BHABANI SENGUPTA OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, INDIA WAS INCAPABLE OF ORGANIZING VAST INDIAN OCEAN AREA, AND WEST GERMANY'S DIETER BRAUN FORESAW IRAN TAKING OVER THAT ROLE. BRAUN CITED IRAN'S GROWING MILITARY CAPABILITY AND ITS ECONOMIC STRENGTH AS FACTORS ENABLING IT SOME DAY TO IMPLEMENT A POLICY OF LEADING LITTORAL STATES IN EFFORTS TO EXCLUDE OUTSIDE POWERS. ON OTHER HAND, HE NOTED THAT IF THIS EXCLUSION COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED, INDIA'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY WOULD KEEP THAT COUNTRY IN PARAMOUNT POSITION.

4. IN ITS POLICY STATEMENTS ON INDIAN OCEAN, IRAN HAS EFFECTIVELY TAKEN OVER CONCEPT OF ZONE OF PEACE AS ITS WON, PREDICTING THAT REALIZATION OF THAT GOAL CAN ONLY TAKE PLACE THROUGH IMPROVEMENT OF ECONOMIC CONDITION AND INTERDEPENDENCE OF LITTORAL STATES. SHAH SEES HIMSELF AS LEADER OF SUCH EFFORTS, FOLLOWING ON HIS INDIAN OCEAN COMMON MARKET PROPOSALS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND LAST FALL.

MIKLOS

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